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2 December 1963



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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN



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DAILY BRIEF

*Venezuela: More than 3,000,000 voters defied terrorist threats Sunday to cast ballots for president and congress.

Early unofficial returns showed Raul Leoni of reform-minded President Betancourt's Democratic Action Party (AD) and Jovito Villalba of the more socialist Republican Democratic Union (URD) alternating the lead. Official returns in Caracas as of 0300 local time, however, had dark horse Arturo Uslar Pietri with a 2-1 lead over Leoni, who nonetheless was expected to pull ahead when votes from outside the capital were tallied. AD and URD congressmen probably will predominate in congress, but no party will have a clear majority.

For months terrorists of the Communist-directed Armed Forces of National Liberation (FALN) had threatened a wave of election-day terror to keep voters away from the polls. However, a pre-election crackdown by police and election-day vigilance by the army and the national guard kept terrorist incidents well below the level set during the general strike of 19 and 20 November.

Security forces expect the terrorists to attempt large-scale demonstrations in Caracas on 3 December if Leoni appears to be the winner. The army plans to "clean up" FALN guerrilla forces in western Venezuela as soon as possible, primarily to thwart future FALN

efforts to discredit the government and also to prevent urban terrorists from joining the guerrillas. The army forced the guerrillas out of the coastal areas of the western states into the mountains last year, but FALN units have reinfiltrated the area.

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DAILY BRIEF

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*Syria: (Internal divisions continue to threaten the stability of the Baathist government.)

(Premier Hafiz, a military member of the Baath, appears on the verge of breaking with his party's extremists. He reportedly has halted the activities of the national guard--the Baath's paramilitary wing--and is casting about for support from traditional Syrian political elements, as well as from the military.)

(Hafiz' actions reportedly have infuriated doctrinaire Baathist Major General Umran, Deputy Premier and Chief of Staff. Interior Minister Atasi, a long-time party member, is said to have resigned and denounced Hafiz and Umran as opportunists.)

(Ambassador Knight reports a growing feeling that the days of the Baath in Syria are numbered. There have been reports of plotting by both party and non-party military officers. Knight comments that a coup attempt may be imminent. He considers it likely that Hafiz will retain control by allying himself with moderate Baathist and non-Baathist officers.)

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*South Vietnam: The new regime continues to encounter difficulties in trying to consolidate its control.

There is considerable public pressure for retaliation against officials identified with the Diem government. A reshuffling of top military corps commanders has been postponed following press leaks that the changes were being forced by public demands for the ouster of northern corps commander General Do Cao Tri, popularly thought to be anti-Buddhist. General Tri has implied that two other generals interested in taking over his command were behind the public agitation.

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The Viet Cong continue to maintain military pressure on the government with a high level of harassing and terrorist actions. During the week ending 26 November, however, Viet Cong attacks dropped to 106, only slightly above normal averages for the year.

(General Minh, leader of the new military junta, told Ambassador Lodge on 30 November that the success of some recent Viet Cong attacks, particularly against Special Forces, was due to effective Communist penetration of government units over the past two years.)

The Communists also may be encouraging public restiveness in the hope of weakening the new government before it becomes firmly organized. In two provincial towns in the Viet Cong - infested delta, crowds of women on 16 and 25 November protested continued air and artillery strikes by the government and carried banners urging Americans to "go home."

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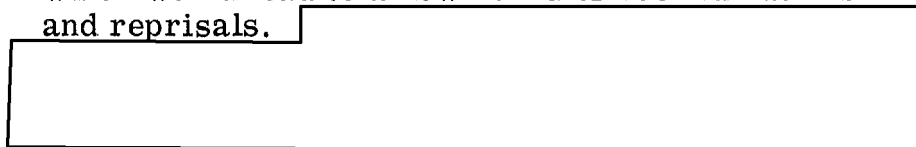
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NOTES



Pakistan-India: Pakistan's order closing one of two remaining Indian consular offices in East Pakistan is the latest in a series of actions by the two governments against each other's representatives. Both have long sought to circumscribe the diplomatic and propaganda operations of the other, usually alleging subversive activity or espionage. Nehru's public reaction thus far has been restrained, but he will be under pressure to take retaliatory action which would lead to a new round of recriminations and reprisals.

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DAILY BRIEF

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- The Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs
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